

# Arizona Department of Public Safety

## FY 2006 and FY 2007 Issues



**Summary** – The following critical issues represent the Arizona Department of Public Safety's requests for funding adjustments for FY 2006 and FY 2007 that fall outside of the Governor's budget request instructions.

**Crime Lab Personnel for Pima County Cases** – A.R.S. § 41-1771 gives the DPS Crime Laboratory the responsibility to provide scientific services to all Criminal Justice Agencies statewide. In FY 2002, the Pima County Sheriff's Office began submitting all of its cases to the DPS Southern Regional Crime Laboratory for analysis. Until then, the Sheriff's Office had an agreement with the City of Tucson's Crime Lab.

The additional workload includes approximately 800 drug cases, 1,200 blood alcohol submissions, plus support of breath alcohol instruments spread throughout Pima County. The Pima County Board of Supervisors recognized that adding this workload to DPS without additional personnel would only result in case backlogs and missed court deadlines. Therefore, the Board originally agreed to fund an additional three criminalist positions through FY 2003 to handle the increased workload.

DPS requested additional funding for FY 2004 and FY 2005 but has yet to receive it. The Pima County Board has extended its funding commitment through FY 2005 but is not legally bound to continue the funding indefinitely. In light of our statutory responsibility to provide crime lab services, DPS is requesting \$212,700 in FY 2006 and FY 2007 to fund these essential positions.

**Drug, Gang, and Violent Crime Control** – For the past 15 years the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) has provided grant funding for 10 criminalists in the DPS crime labs to perform drug analyses in support of thousands of cases annually submitted by Arizona law enforcement agencies.

There is a very real chance that the federal funding that supports this grant program may be eliminated in the next federal budget. If this occurs, many cases will be backlogged or will not be prosecuted at all. This critical issue requests \$584,900 in each of FY 2006 and FY 2007 to maintain this important program in the event the federal funding evaporates.

We hope to know sometime in the Fall whether the funding is approved or not by Congress, and we will keep the Executive and Legislative budget offices apprised of the situation.

**Crime Lab Personnel - Clandestine Labs** – Laws 1999, Chapter 346 established a funding mechanism to help crime laboratories handle increased caseloads from large increases in the numbers of police officers in the 1990's. The monies are distributed by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) as grants. Chapter 346 also increased funding for courts, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. The need for these funds was known as "fill the gap."

Since FY 2001, the DPS crime labs have received about \$305,000 per year in "fill the gap" grants for 6 FTE Positions to respond to clandestine methamphetamine lab crime scenes. ACJC has signaled a desire to eliminate this grant in favor of using the monies for case processing at all crime labs in the State. If this grant is eliminated, an important criminal justice service will be jeopardized since DPS currently responds to clandestine lab scenes throughout the State.